

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EAE-00 EUR-12 IO-10 ACDA-10 DPW-01

CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 SAM-01 /100 W

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P R 171137Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5740

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UNCLAS BANGKOK 26317

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR PINS TH CH

SUBJECT: THAI-CAMBODIA BORDER INCIDENT: ALLEGED IN TAM INVOLVE-
MENT AND WHAT KHUKRIT AND CHATCHAI REALLY SAID ABOUT IT

REF: BANGKOK 26167

1. THE BANGKOK POST OF DECEMBER 17 CARRIES AN ARTICLE HEAD-
LINED "IN TAM INVOLVED IN BORDER DISPUTE - KHUKRIT". THE
OPERATIVE PARAGRAPHS READ: "PRIME MINISTER KUKRIT PRAMOJ
YESTERDAY BLAMED FORMER CAMBODIAN PREMIER IN TAM'S SUPPORTERS
FOR CREATING LAST WEEK'S BORDER CONFLICT WITH CAMBODIA.

HE DIDN'T ELABORATE, BUT EXPRESSED HOPE THAT THE DISPUTE
WITH CAMBODIA COULD BE SETTLED SOON BY MEANS OF NEGOTIATION."

2. AS USUAL KHUKRIT DID NOT SAY ANYTHING OF THE SORT. THE
EXCHANGE WITH THE REPORTERS, WHICH USIS HAS TRANSLATED, WENT
AS FOLLOWS:

REPORTER: ON THE CAMBODIA ISSUE, WHAT HAS BEEN REPORTED TO
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YOU?

KHUKRIT: I HAVEN'T RECEIVED ANY REPORT. I'VE HEARD IT IS TENSE. I DON'T THINK IT IS A SERIOUS PROBLEM; WE MUST REGARD IT AS AN ORDINARY BORDER INCIDENT.

REPORTER: BUT IN TAM WAS REPORTED TO HAVE A HAND IN IT....

KHUKRIT: IT WAS REPORTED SO. IN THE CAMBODIAN GOVERNMENT, COMMUNICATION IS A DIFFICULT THING.

3. THE FOREIGN MINISTER ALSO SPOKE WITH REPORTERS ON DECEMBER 16. HIS EXCHANGE WENT AS FOLLOWS (USIS TRANSLATION):

REPORTER: WHAT ABOUT THE CAMBODIA ISSUE?

CHATCHAI: NOTHING DOING.

REPORTER: MANY TROOPS ARE REPORTEDLY STATIONED AT THE BORDER.

CHATCHAI: IT'S ORDINARY THAT THEY MUST WATCH THE BORDER. NOW WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO CONTACT. THE OFFICIALS AT POIPET SET OUT FOR BATTAMBANG THIS MORNING. A MEETING IS EXPECTED AT 9 A.M.

REPORTER: BETWEEN WHOM AND WHOM?

CHATCHAI: BETWEEN THAIS AND CAMBODIANS. DO YOU EXPECT IT TO BE A MEETING WITH THE BURMESE?

REPORTER: AT WHAT LEVEL IS THE MEETING GOING TO BE?

CHATCHAI: AT THE LEVEL OF THE LIAISON OFFICER STATIONED THERE.

REPORTER: ABOUT WHAT ISSUE?

CHATCHAI: ABOUT THE BORDER QUESTION, I.E. WHICH SPOT IS OURS AND WHICH IS THEIRS? THERE PROBABLY WON'T BE ANY PROBLEM BECAUSE BOTH SIDES USE THE SAME MAP, SAME SCALE.

REPORTER: IT IS ABOUT TRESPASSING THE BORDER?

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CHATCHAI: NO. IT IS NOW KNOWN YET WHO HAS TRESPASSED WHOSE TERRITORY. WE MUST FIRST LOOK AT THE MAP AND THE DIVIDING LINE. ESPECIALLY SINCE THE AREA IS FLAT AND IT IS DIFFICULT TO LOOK FOR ANYTHING THAT INDICATES THE DIVIDING LINE, THE DISTANCE BETWEEN THE BORDER POSTS BEING AS FAR AS FIVE KILOMETERS.

REPORTER: WHY* FORMERLY THERE WAS NO SUCH TRANSGRESSION.

CHATCHAI: THAT'S WHAT I DON'T KNOW AT ALL. AS I KNOW, FORMERLY THERE WAS NO TRANSGRESSION. NOW WHEN BOTH SIDES ARE CLOSER TO EACH OTHER, THERE IS TRANSGRESSION. THERE MUST BE SOME MISUNDERSTANDING, OR THERE MAY BE SOMEONE INTERFERING, WHICH I DO NOT KNOW.

REPORTER: DOES THE INCIDENT AT THE BORDER WITH CAMBODIA HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH IN TAM?

CHATCHAI: I DON'T KNOW YET. I HAVE SPEEDED UP HIS BEING BROUGHT TO BANGKOK. TOMORROW HE WILL BE BROUGHT TO BANGKOK; THEN HE WILL BE SENT TO FRANCE.

REPORTER: WILL HE BE SENT THERE TOMORROW?

CHATCHAI: YES. TOMORROW OR THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW.

REPORTER: IT MEANS WE HAVE DISCOVERED FIRM EVIDENCE...?

CHATCHAI: I CAN'T SAY WHAT EVIDENCE HAS BEEN FOUND, BUT I CAN SAY THAT I HAVE INSTRUCTED THAT HE MUST LEAVE WITHIN SEVEN DAYS. UP TO NOW HE HAS NOT LEFT YET. SO I MUST SEND HIM OUT AS URGENTLY AS POSSIBLE; OTHERWISE MISUNDERSTANDING WILL CONTINUE TO EXIST.

4. CONCLUSIONS: NEITHER THIS EMBASSY NOR THE RTG APPEARS TO HAVE ANY EVIDENCE OF IN TAM'S INVOLVEMENT. THE PRESS IS CLEARLY TRYING TO CREATE SOMETHING OUT OF NOTHING.
WHITEHOUSE

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